

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. An Internet-based computer network comprising:
2 at least one client computer;
3 a plurality of content provider computers; and
4 a server computer;
5 the client computer being programmed to gather personal preferences of a user of the
6 client computer with respect to screensaver content and to cause the personal preferences to
7 be sent to the server computer;
8 the server computer being programmed to receive the personal preferences and to
9 cause meta information to be sent to the client computer identifying screensaver content
10 corresponding to the personal preferences;
11 the client computer being programmed to receive the meta information and, based on
12 the meta information, to obtain the identified screensaver content directly from a plurality of
13 the content provider computers in accordance with the user preferences.

- 1 2. The network of claim 1 wherein the screensaver content is visual content.

- 1 3. The network of claim 1 wherein the screensaver content is audio content.

- 1 4. The network of claim 1 wherein the client computer is a mobile display device.

- 1 5. An Internet-based computer network comprising:
2 at least one client computer;
3 at least one content provider computer; and
4 a server computer;
5 the client computer being programmed to gather personal preferences of a user of the
6 client computer with respect to screensaver content and to cause the personal preferences to
7 be sent to the server computer;
8 the server computer being programmed to receive the personal preferences and to
9 cause the client computer to receive, from the at least one content provider computer,
10 screensaver content corresponding to the personal preferences, the screensaver content

11 received by the client computer being updated periodically and automatically in accordance
12 with changes in the screensaver content at the server computer.

1 6. The network of claim 5 comprising a plurality of servers, wherein the client
2 computer is programmed to access a first server and then to access a second server if so
3 instructed by the first server in order to balance server load.

1 7. An Internet-based computer network comprising:
2 at least one client computer;
3 at least one content provider computer; and
4 a server computer;
5 the client computer being programmed to gather personal preferences of a user of the
6 client computer with respect to screensaver content and to cause the personal preferences to
7 be sent to the server computer;
8 the server computer being programmed to receive the personal preferences and to
9 cause the client computer to receive from the at least one content provider computer
10 screensaver content corresponding to the personal preferences;
11 the client computer being programmed to receive the screensaver content using a low-
12 bandwidth connection and to execute at least one item of the screensaver content in a
13 screensaver program before a plurality of remaining items of the screensaver content are
14 received by the client computer.

1 8. An Internet-based computer network comprising:
2 at least one client computer;
3 at least one content provider computer; and
4 a server computer;
5 the client computer being programmed to gather personal preferences of a user of the
6 client computer with respect to screensaver content and to cause the personal preferences to
7 be sent to the server computer;

8 the server computer being programmed to receive the personal preferences and to
9 cause the client computer to receive from the at least one content provider computer
10 screensaver content corresponding to the personal preferences;

11 the client computer being programmed to receive the screensaver content and
12 to execute the screensaver content in a screensaver program; the client computer being
13 programmed to enable the user to actuate, during execution of the screensaver program, a
14 hypertext link to the at least one content provider computer from which the screensaver
15 content was received.

1 9. An Internet-based computer network comprising:

2 a plurality of client computers corresponding to a community of users sharing a
3 common screensaver;

4 at least one content provider computer; and
5 a server computer;

6 each of the client computers being programmed to gather personal preferences of a
7 user of the client computer with respect to screensaver content and to cause the personal
8 preferences to be sent to the server computer;

9 the server computer being programmed to receive the personal preferences
10 from the plurality of client computers and to cause each of the plurality of client computers to
11 receive, in common, screensaver content corresponding to the personal preferences received
12 from each of the plurality of client computers corresponding to the community of users.

1 10. The network of claim 9 wherein the each of the client computers is
2 programmed to exclude from execution by a screensaver program at the client computer the
3 screensaver content received in common by the plurality of client computers, based on input
4 from a user of the client computer.

1 11. An Internet-based computer network comprising:
2 at least one client computer;
3 at least one content provider computer; and
4 a server computer;

5 the client computer being programmed to gather personal preferences of a user of the
6 client computer with respect to screensaver content and to cause the personal preferences to
7 be sent to the server computer;

8 the server computer being programmed to receive the personal preferences and to
9 cause the client computer to receive screensaver content corresponding to the personal
10 preferences from the at least one content provider computer;

11 the client computer being programmed to return at least one report to the
12 server computer regarding availability of the screensaver content from the at least one
13 content provider computer.

1 12. An Internet-based computer network comprising:

2 a plurality of client computers corresponding to a community of users sharing a
3 common screensaver;

4 at least one content provider computer; and

5 a server computer;

6 each of the client computers being programmed to receive content from the at least
7 one content provider computer, to allow a user of the client computer to perform a single
8 action indicating a desire to include the content in a screensaver program, and to transmit
9 information to the server computer indicating the desire to include the content in the
10 screensaver program;

11 the server computer being programmed to receive the information indicating
12 the desire to include the content in the screensaver program and to cause each of the plurality
13 of client computers to receive, in common, the content for execution in the screensaver
14 program.

1 13. An Internet-based computer network comprising:

2 at least one client computer;

3 at least one content provider computer; and

4 a server computer;

5 the client computer being programmed to gather personal preferences of a user of the
6 client computer with respect to screensaver content and to cause the personal preferences to
7 be sent to the server computer;

8 the server computer being programmed to receive the personal preferences from the
9 client computer, to cause the client computer to receive from the at least one content provider
10 computer screensaver content corresponding to the personal preferences, and to cause an
11 account of the user of the client computer to be modified based on a value associated with the
12 screensaver content.

1 14. An Internet-based computer network comprising:

2 at client computer; and

3 a server computer;

4 the client computer being programmed to operate a browser program capable of
5 sending an access request to the server computer;

6 the server computer being programmed to send a browser_id cookie to the browser
7 program in response to the access request from the browser program;

8 the browser program being programmed to save the browser_id cookie in a browser
9 cookie database to present to the server in subsequent access requests;

10 the client computer being programmed to operate a client program capable of sending
11 an access request to the server computer;

12 the server computer being programmed to send the client_id cookie to the client
13 program in response to the access request from the client program;

14 the client program being programmed to save the client_id cookie in a client cookie
15 database to present to the server in subsequent access requests;

16 the client computer being programmed to send an access request to the server
17 computer via the browser program and to send the client_id cookie and the browser_id
18 cookie to the server computer;

19 the server computer being programmed to match the browser_id cookie with the
20 client_id cookie so that the server computer can associate subsequent access requests from
21 the client program with the browser_id cookie without receiving the browser_id cookie from
22 the client program together with the subsequent access requests.

1 15. The network of claim 14, wherein the client computer is programmed to
2 download the client program from a third-party site, after the browser program has saved the
3 browser_id cookie in a browser cookie database to present to the server in subsequent access
4 requests.

1 16. A method in an Internet network comprising at least one client computer, a
2 plurality of content provider computers, and a server computer, the method comprising:
3 the client computer gathering personal preferences of a user of the client computer
4 with respect to screensaver content and causing the personal preferences to be sent to the
5 server computer;

6 the server computer receiving the personal preferences and causing meta information
7 to be sent to the client computer identifying screensaver content corresponding to the
8 personal preferences; and

9 the client computer receiving the meta information and, based on the meta
10 information, obtaining the identified screensaver content directly from a plurality of the
11 content provider computers in accordance with the user preferences.

1 17. A method in an Internet-based computer network comprising at least one client
2 computer, at least one content provider computer, and a server computer, the method
3 comprising:

4 the client computer gathering personal preferences of a user of the client computer
5 with respect to screensaver content and causing the personal preferences to be sent to the
6 server computer;

7 the server computer receiving the personal preferences and causing the client
8 computer to receive, from the at least one content provider computer, screensaver content
9 corresponding to the personal preferences, the screensaver content received by the client
10 computer being updated periodically and automatically in accordance with changes in the
11 screensaver content at the server computer.

1 18. A method in an Internet-based computer network comprising at least one client
2 computer, at least one content provider computer, and a server computer, the method
3 comprising:

4 the client computer gathering personal preferences of a user of the client computer
5 with respect to screensaver content and causing the personal preferences to be sent to the
6 server computer;

7 the server computer receiving the personal preferences and causing the client
8 computer to receive from the at least one content provider computer screensaver content
9 corresponding to the personal preferences; and

10 the client computer receiving the screensaver content using a low-bandwidth
11 connection and executing at least one item of the screensaver content in a screensaver
12 program before a plurality of remaining items of the screensaver content are received by the
13 client computer.

1 19. A method in an Internet-based computer network comprising at least one client
2 computer, at least one content provider computer, and a server computer, the method
3 comprising:

4 the client computer gathering personal preferences of a user of the client computer
5 with respect to screensaver content and causing the personal preferences to be sent to the
6 server computer;

7 the server computer receiving the personal preferences and causing the client
8 computer to receive from the at least one content provider computer screensaver content
9 corresponding to the personal preferences; and

10 the client computer receiving the screensaver content and executing the
11 screensaver content in a screensaver program; the client computer enabling the user to
12 actuate, during execution of the screensaver program, a hypertext link to the at least one
13 content provider computer from which the screensaver content was received.

1 20. A method in an Internet-based computer network comprising a plurality of client
2 computers corresponding to a community of users sharing a common screensaver, at least
3 one content provider computer, and a server computer, the method comprising:

4 each of the client computers gathering personal preferences of a user of the client
5 computer with respect to screensaver content and causing the personal preferences to be sent
6 to the server computer; and

7 the server computer receiving the personal preferences from the plurality of
8 client computers and causing each of the plurality of client computers to receive, in common,
9 screensaver content corresponding to the personal preferences received from each of the
10 plurality of client computers corresponding to the community of users.

1 21. A method in an Internet-based computer network comprising at least one client
2 computer, at least one content provider computer, and a server computer, the method
3 comprising:

4 the client computer gathering personal preferences of a user of the client computer
5 with respect to screensaver content and causing the personal preferences to be sent to the
6 server computer;

7 the server computer receiving the personal preferences and causing the client
8 computer to receive screensaver content corresponding to the personal preferences from the
9 at least one content provider computer;

10 the client computer returning at least one report to the server computer
11 regarding availability of the screensaver content from the at least one content provider
12 computer.

1 22. A method in an Internet-based computer network comprising a plurality of client
2 computers corresponding to a community of users sharing a common screensaver, at least
3 one content provider computer, and a server computer, the method comprising:

4 each of the client computers receiving content from the at least one content provider
5 computer, allowing a user of the client computer to perform a single action indicating a
6 desire to include the content in a screensaver program, and transmitting information to the
7 server computer indicating the desire to include the content in the screensaver program; and

8 the server computer receiving the information indicating the desire to include
9 the content in the screensaver program and causing each of the plurality of client computers
10 to receive, in common, the content for execution in the screensaver program.

1 23. A method in an Internet-based computer network comprising at least one client
2 computer, at least one content provider computer, and a server computer, the method
3 comprising:

4 the client computer gathering personal preferences of a user of the client computer
5 with respect to screensaver content and causing the personal preferences to be sent to the
6 server computer; and

7 the server computer receiving the personal preferences from the client computer,
8 causing the client computer to receive from the at least one content provider computer
9 screensaver content corresponding to the personal preferences, and causing an account of the
10 user of the client computer to be modified based on a value associated with the screensaver
11 content.

1 24. A method in an Internet-based computer network comprising at client computer
2 and a server computer, the method comprising:

3 the client computer operating a browser program capable of sending an access request
4 to the server computer;

5 the server computer sending a browser_id cookie to the browser program in response
6 to the access request from the browser program;

7 the browser program saving the browser_id cookie in a browser cookie database to
8 present to the server in subsequent access requests;

9 the client computer operating a client program capable of sending an access request to
10 the server computer;

11 the server computer sending the client_id cookie to the client program in response to
12 the access request from the client program;

13 the client program saving the client_id cookie in a client cookie database to present to
14 the server in subsequent access requests;

15 the client computer sending an access request to the server computer via the browser
16 program and to send the client_id cookie and the browser_id cookie to the server computer;
17 and

18 the server computer matching the browser_id cookie with the client_id cookie so that
19 the server computer can associate subsequent access requests from the client program with

- 20 the browser_id cookie without receiving the browser_id cookie from the client program
- 21 together with the subsequent access requests.